

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-11 and adding new claim 14 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for manufacturing polymer granules ~~including~~ comprising the successive operations of mixing a base polymer and additives to form a polymer mixture,
shaping the polymer mixture, and
curing the polymer mixture,
grinding the ~~cured~~ polymer mixture to form granules,
~~characterized in that it includes a specific step of and~~
adding a shading colorant to the polymer mixture ~~of the base polymer and of the additives,~~ followed by ~~a step of~~ carrying out an incomplete homogenization of said shading colorant in said polymer mixture, the duration of which is fixed according to desired colouring anisotropy characteristics of the granules.

2. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the shading colorant is added during the operation of mixing the base polymer and the additives, the operation of mixing the whole being continued for ~~the~~ a time required for the polymer-additives mixture to be homogeneous and corresponding to ~~the~~ a desired heterogeneity of the distribution of the shading colorant in the mixture.

3. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the shading colorant is incorporated in an internal mixer brought to a temperature ranging from approximately 100°C to approximately 150°.

4. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the shading colorant is added subsequently to the operation of mixing the base polymer and the additives.

5. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the different operations are carried out on a continuous production line.

6. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the shading colorant is added at the time of ~~the~~ an extrusion operation, ~~the~~ an extruder carrying out incomplete homogenization of the shading colorant.

7. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the different steps are carried out batchwise.

8. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the shading colorant is added at ~~the~~ rolls of ~~the~~ a mixer or at ~~the~~ a calendering machine.

9. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the base polymer is selected from ~~the~~ group of polymers ~~or their derivatives of the~~ consisting of rubber, ~~styrene-butadiene rubber (SBR), ethylene-propylenediene monomere (EPDM), elastomer or and~~ thermoplastic synthetic high ~~polymer types~~ polymers and derivatives thereof.

10. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the additives added to the base polymer include one or more colorants.

11. (Currently Amended) Polymer granules usable for the manufacturing of surface coatings or of moulded articles, ~~characterized in that they present~~ comprising a plurality of granules, each granule presenting anisotropic shades of colouring.

12. (Previously Presented) A surface coating obtained by implementing granules according to claim 11.

13. (Previously Presented) Moulded articles obtained by implementing granules according to claim 11.

14. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the base polymer is selected from the group consisting of styrene-butadiene rubber, ethylene-propylenediene monomere and derivatives thereof.